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CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT**22 MARCH 2019**

(U) CALIFORNIA**(U) Blythe – Blythe Man Defrauded Donors of More than \$250,000**

(U) According to federal prosecutors an 80-year-old California man defrauded donors by setting up fake political action committees purporting to support campaigns including Senator Bernie Sanders' presidential bid and former Rep. Beto O'Rourke's Senate race in Texas. Prosecutors say the man pocketed \$250,000 in contributions that donors' thought was going to political candidates and causes. He allegedly collected more than \$140,000 from contributions collected through a website claiming to support Sanders. He also allegedly collected money from donors who thought they were supporting Andrew Gillum's campaign for the Florida governorship.

SOURCE: 21 March 2019, [US News](#)

SOUTHWEST BORDER**(U) Texas – More Than \$3M Worth of Alleged Methamphetamine Seized within 2-Day Span**

(U) Donna– US Customs and Border Protection officers seized more than \$3 million worth of alleged methamphetamine within two days. The first incident occurred on 17 March when officers discovered 38 packages of alleged methamphetamine. The second incident occurred on 19 March when officers found 39 packages of alleged methamphetamine in another vehicle. The drivers and passengers from both incidents were arrested and turned over to the custody of Homeland Security Investigations.

SOURCE: 21 March 2019, [KRGV](#)

(U) NATIONAL**(U) Georgia – Officers Arrest 16 Suspects, Seize \$35M Worth of Marijuana and Other Illegal Drugs**

(U) Gwinnett County – A major drug bust where approximately \$35 million in marijuana and other illegal drugs were seized, making the operation one of the biggest drug trafficking cases in metro Atlanta. Within the last week, officials reported they located five grow houses with "elaborate" setups and seized more than 1,500 marijuana plants. In all, police arrested 16 people from Gwinnett County and police said more arrests could be made, as the investigation is ongoing. Police also confiscated 22 guns, six cars and \$676,000 in cash.

SOURCE: 20 March 2019, [WSB-TV Atlanta](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL**(U) Afghanistan – Two US Service Members Killed in Afghanistan**

(U) Islamabad – The NATO-led Resolute Support mission released a statement on 21 March, saying two US service members were killed in Afghanistan on 15 March while conducting an operation. No further details were given in the statement and withheld the names of the service members until next of kin were informed. The US military's mission is focused on guiding and aiding Afghan forces battling the

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Taliban, the Resolute Support Mission consists of 17,000 troops, about half of them from the United States. A smaller number of US troops operate in Afghanistan under a counter-terrorism mission.
SOURCE: 21 March 2019, [Reuters](#)

(U) Afghanistan – ISIS Claims Kabul Attack on Shiite Shrine

(U) Kabul – ISIS has claimed responsibility for a string of bombings near a Shiite shrine and cemetery in the Afghan capital the day before that killed six people and wounded 20. The bombings in western Kabul came as people were gathering at the cemetery on 21 March to mark Nowruz, the Persian Iranian New Year. The police's initial investigation indicated that three explosive devices had been remotely detonated, setting off the explosions. In a statement by ISIS the attack's "aim was to spoil the ritual of the polytheists." The Sunni militant group considers Shiites as apostates deserving of death.
SOURCE: 22 March 2019, [Seattle Times](#)

(U) Belgium – Russian Hackers Targeting European Governments Ahead of May Election

(U) Brussels – Security firm FireEye says Russian hackers have been spear phishing European governments ahead of May's European Parliament elections. The company found that two state-sponsored hacking groups, APT28 and Sandworm, used spear phishing — the practice of sending out emails designed to look like they're from a trusted party — in an attempt to obtain government information. APT28 is believed to be linked to Russian military intelligence agency GRU and has been labeled as one of the malicious actors behind the 2016 Democratic National Convention hack. FireEye said European government institutions were sent emails with links to websites that appeared to be authentic, luring a person into changing their password and thus sharing their credentials with hackers. As Europe parliamentary vote is in May, tensions are running high over the potential for foreign states like Russia to use their cyber capability to sway the results.
SOURCE: 21 March 2019, [CNBC](#)

(U) Macedonia – North Macedonia Sentences 7 ISIS fighters Captured in Syria

(U) Skopje – A court in North Macedonia has sentenced seven citizens, accusing them of fighting with the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq. Six men were given six-year sentences for joining ISIS, while a seventh man was jailed for nine years after also being found guilty on charges of organizing a terrorist group. This is the second group from North Macedonia sentenced for joining and recruiting ISIS fighters. According to police, about 150 of the country's citizens have joined Islamic State extremists.
SOURCE: 21 March 2019, [Associated Press](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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